

Docket No. AUS920010953US1

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method of monitoring use of an instant messaging
5 user account, comprising:
 receiving an instant message;
 determining if a transcript of the instant message
is to be stored;
 storing the transcript of the instant message in a
10 storage device if a transcript of the instant message is
to be stored; and
 providing the transcript to a designated monitor of
the instant messaging user account.
- 15 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is
implemented in an instant messaging service provider of a
distributed data processing system.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is
20 implemented in a network service provider of a
distributed data processing system.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is
implemented in a client device of a distributed data
25 processing system.
5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 analyzing the transcript to identify at least one
characteristic of the transcript, wherein providing the
30 transcript to a designated monitor of the instant
messaging user account includes providing information

Docket No. AUS920010953US1

regarding the at least one characteristic of the transcript to the designated monitor.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein providing the transcript to a designated monitor includes transmitting the transcript as an attachment to an electronic mail message.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein the electronic mail message is transmitted in response to a request from the designated monitor.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein providing the transcript to a designated monitor includes generating a web page through which the transcript is provided to the designated monitor.
9. The method of claim 5, wherein the at least one characteristic includes at least one of a ranked list of user identifications for most frequent incoming instant messages, a ranked list of user identifications for most frequent outbound target user identifications, a ranked list of most frequent recent incoming or outbound user identifications, a date/time distribution of instant messages, tracking of contact patterns for a particular user identification.
10. The method of claim 5, wherein analyzing the transcript includes filtering for text including at least one of proper names, addresses and phone numbers.

Docket No. AUS920010953US1

11. The method of claim 1, wherein determining if a transcript of the instant message is to be stored includes:

looking up a user identification of a source of the
5 instant message in a user database; and

determining if a transcript field indicates if a transcript is to be stored.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein determining if a transcript of the instant message is to be stored further includes:

looking up a user identification of a destination of the instant message in an approved contact list; and

determining that a transcript is to be stored if the
15 user identification of the destination does not appear in the approved contact list.

13. An apparatus for monitoring use of an instant messaging user account, comprising:

20 means for receiving an instant message;

means for determining if a transcript of the instant message is to be stored;

means for storing the transcript of the instant message in a storage device if a transcript of the
25 instant message is to be stored; and

means for providing the transcript to a designated monitor of the instant messaging user account.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the apparatus is
30 part of an instant messaging service provider of a distributed data processing system.

Docket No. AUS920010953US1

15. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the apparatus is part of a network service provider of a distributed data processing system.

5 16. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the apparatus is part of a client device of a distributed data processing system.

17. The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:
10 means for analyzing the transcript to identify at least one characteristic of the transcript, wherein the means for providing the transcript to a designated monitor of the instant messaging user account includes means for providing information regarding the at least
15 one characteristic of the transcript to the designated monitor.

18. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the means for providing the transcript to a designated monitor includes
20 means for transmitting the transcript as an attachment to an electronic mail message.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the electronic mail message is transmitted in response to a request from
25 the designated monitor.

20. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the means for providing the transcript to a designated monitor includes means for generating a web page through which the
30 transcript is provided to the designated monitor.

Docket No. AUS920010953US1

21. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the at least one characteristic includes at least one of a ranked list of user identifications for most frequent incoming instant messages, a ranked list of user identifications for most frequent outbound target user identifications, a ranked list of most frequent recent incoming or outbound user identifications, a date/time distribution of instant messages, tracking of contact patterns for a particular user identification.

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22. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the means for analyzing the transcript includes means for filtering for text including at least one of proper names, addresses and phone numbers.

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23. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the means for determining if a transcript of the instant message is to be stored includes:

means for looking up a user identification of a source of the instant message in a user database; and

means for determining if a transcript field indicates if a transcript is to be stored.

24. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the means for determining if a transcript of the instant message is to be stored further includes:

means for looking up a user identification of a destination of the instant message in an approved contact list; and

means for determining that a transcript is to be stored if the user identification of the destination does not appear in the approved contact list.

Docket No. AUS920010953US1

25. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for monitoring use of an instant messaging user account, comprising:

- 5 first instructions for receiving an instant message;
 second instructions for determining if a transcript
of the instant message is to be stored;
 third instructions for storing the transcript of the
instant message in a storage device if a transcript of
10 the instant message is to be stored; and
 fourth instructions for providing the transcript to
a designated monitor of the instant messaging user
account.

- 15 26. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein
the computer program product is implemented in
association with instructions of an instant messaging
service provider of a distributed data processing system.

- 20 27. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein
the computer program product is implemented in
association with instructions of a network service
provider of a distributed data processing system.

- 25 28. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein
the computer program product is implemented in
association with instructions of a client device of a
distributed data processing system.

- 30 29. The computer program product of claim 25, further
comprising:

Docket No. AUS920010953US1

fifth instructions for analyzing the transcript to identify at least one characteristic of the transcript, wherein the fourth instructions for providing the transcript to a designated monitor of the instant
5 messaging user account include instructions for providing information regarding the at least one characteristic of the transcript to the designated monitor.

30. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein
10 the fourth instructions for providing the transcript to a designated monitor include instructions for transmitting the transcript as an attachment to an electronic mail message.

15 31. The computer program product of claim 30, wherein the electronic mail message is transmitted in response to a request from the designated monitor.

32. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein
20 the fourth instructions for providing the transcript to a designated monitor include instructions for generating a web page through which the transcript is provided to the designated monitor.

25 33. The computer program product of claim 29, wherein the at least one characteristic includes at least one of a ranked list of user identifications for most frequent incoming instant messages, a ranked list of user
30 identifications for most frequent outbound target user identifications, a ranked list of most frequent recent

4004953-123334

Docket No. AUS920010953US1

incoming or outbound user identifications, a date/time distribution of instant messages, tracking of contact patterns for a particular user identification.

5 34. The computer program product of claim 29, wherein the fifth instructions for analyzing the transcript include instructions for filtering for text including at least one of proper names, addresses and phone numbers.

10 35. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein the second instructions for determining if a transcript of the instant message is to be stored include:
instructions for looking up a user identification of a source of the instant message in a user database; and
15 instructions for determining if a transcript field indicates if a transcript is to be stored.

36. The computer program product of claim 35, wherein the second instructions for determining if a transcript
20 of the instant message is to be stored further include:
instructions for looking up a user identification of a destination of the instant message in an approved contact list; and
instructions for determining that a transcript is to
25 be stored if the user identification of the destination does not appear in the approved contact list.